

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 04509 021137Z

47

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: VIEWS OF DEFENSE MIN ANDREOTTI ON POLITICAL IMPACT OF
DIVORCE REFERENDUM AND ATLANTIC RELATIONS

1. I PAID A COURTESY CALL APRIL 1 ON EX-PREMIER AND CURRENT DEF
MIN ANDREOTTI. DURING COURSE OF OUR CONVERSATION, I ASKED ANDRE-
OTTI HOW LONG HE THOUGHT THE RUMOR GOVT WOULD SURVIVE AND WHETHER
HE EXPECTED IT WOULD FALL SOON AFTER THE REFERENDUM OR INSTEAD
CONTINUE FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD. ANDREOTTI SAID THAT THIS WOULD
DEPEND TO A LARGE DEGREE ON HOW VITRIOLIC THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN
BECOMES. HE FELT THAT THERE WAS A GOOD PROBABILITY THAT THE GOVT
COULD CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME AFTER THE REFERENDUM, PARTICULARLY
IF RUMOR ASSUMES A FIRMER LEADERSHIP ROLE. EVEN THOUGH THE COMMU-
NISTS AND SOCIALISTS MAY TALK A TOUGH GAME AND SHOW GREAT CONCERN
ABOUT THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE REFERENDUM, THE FACTS ARE THAT
THE SOCIALISTS WANT TO STAY IN THE GOVT AND THE COMMUNISTS DO
NOT WANT TO BURN THEIR BRIDGES WITH IT. ANDREOTTI CONSIDERED THAT
THE ADDITION OF MANCINI (PSI LEFT) TO THE CABINET WAS HELPFUL IN
THAT IT PROVIDED A BROADER POLITICAL BASE AND THIS WAS ONE OF THE
REASONS, HE SAID, THAT HE HAD FINALLY AGREED TO ENTER THE GOVT.
HE ADDED THAT THE SOCIALISTS HAD BEEN VERY ANXIOUS TO BRING IN
MANCINI IN ORDER TO HELP KEEP THEIR LEFT WING IN LINE.

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PAGE 02 ROME 04509 021137Z

2. ANDREOTTI SAID THAT THE ABSENCE OF DONAT-CATTIN(DC) FROM THE

CABINET WILL GIVE THE RUMOR GOVT SOME OF THE SAME PROBLEMS HE (ANDREOTTI) HAD HAD WITH POLITICAL SNIPING BY THE "FORZE NUOVE" LEADER. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT THE ADDITION TO THE CABINET OF DONAT-CATTIN'S LIEUTENANT, VITTORINO COLOMBO, AS HEALTH MIN, WOULD HELP TO KEEP THE "FORZE NUOVE" FACTION FROM CAUSING TOO MUCH TROUBLE WITHIN THE DC. (NOTE: DONAT-CATTIN'S REPORTED ACCEPTANCE OF VITTORINO COLOMBO'S JOB AS HEAD OF THE DC SOCIAL PROGRAM OFFICE SUGGESTS THAT, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, HE DOES NOT INTEND TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS IN HIS OPPOSITION TO PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI.)

3. ANDREOTTI FELT THE CHURCH WOULD PROBABLY PLAY A LOW KEY ROLE IN THE REFERENDUM DEBATE. HE INDICATED IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE TO PREDICT THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THE VOTE. SOME ITALIANS, HE SAID, DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHAT THE WORD "ABROGARE" (ABROGATE) MEANS, AND MANY PEOPLE MIGHT VOTE "YES" (IN FAVOR OF ABROGATION) WHEN THEY REALLY MEANT NO AND VICE VERSA. HE HESITATED TO MAKE A GUESS ON THE OUTCOME, BUT HE DID NOT THINK EITHER SIDE WOULD WIN BY A SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN.

4. ANDREOTTI SAID HE WANTED ME TO KNOW HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS IN NATO. THIS CONCERN IS AN ADDITIONAL REASON HE ACCEPTED THE DEFENSE JOB. ANDREOTTI SAID HE HOPES THAT HE CAN BE HELPFUL IN REESTABLISHING A REAL US-EUROPEAN DIALOGUE AND SENSE OF ALLIANCE COOPERATION WHICH HE BELIEVES HAS BEEN ERODED. VOLPE

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